His Majesties
GRACIOUS
SPEECH
Together with the
LORD KEEPERS,
To both Houses of
PARLIAMENT,
April 13. 1675.

Published by His Majesties special Command.

EDINBURGH,
Re-Printed by His *Majestie's* Printers: *Anno DOM.* 1675.

CUM PRIVILEGIO.

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HIS MAJESTIES GRACIOUS SPEECH To both Houses of PARLIAMENT,

April 13. 1675.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

THe principal End of My calling you now, is to know what you think may be yet wanting to the Security of Religion and Property, and to give my Self the Satisfaction of having used the utermost of My Endeavours to procure and settle a Right and Lasting Understanding between Us; for I must tell you, I find the contrary so much laboured, and that the pernicious Designs of ill Men, have taken so much place under specious Pretences, that it is high time to be watchful in preventing their Contrivances, of which it is not the least, that they would by all the means they can devise, make it unpracticable any longer to continue this present Parliament: For that reason, I confess, I cannot think such have any good meaning to Me: And therefore when I Consider how much the greatest part of this Parliament has either themselves or Fathers, given Me Testimony of their Affections and Loyalty, I should be extreme loth to oblige those Enemies, by parting with such Friends; and they may be assured, that none shall be able to recommend themselves to Me by any other way then their good Services. I have done as much as on My part was possible, to extinguish the fears and jealousies of Popery, and will leave nothing undone, that may shew the World my Zeal to the Protestant Religion, as it is Established in the Church of England, *from which I will never Depart.*

I must needs Recommend to you the Condition of the Fleet, which I am not able to put into that Estate it ought to be, and which will require so much time to Repair and Build, that I should be sorry to see this Summer (and consequently an whole Year) lost, without providing for it.

The season of the Year will not permit any long Session, nor would I have called you now, but in hopes to do something that may give Content to all My Subjects, and to lay before you the Consideration of the Fleet; for I intend to meet you again in Winter. In the mean time, I earnestly Recommend to you all, such a Temper and Moderation in your Proceedings, as may tend to unite us all in Council and Affections, and disappoint the Expectations of those, who can hope only by violent and irregular Motions, to prevent the bringing of this Session to an happy Conclusion.

The Rest I leave to My Lord Keeper.

THE

THE LORD KEEPERS SPEECH.

My Lords,

And you the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of the House of Commons,

THE Solemnity of this days Appearance is Equal to the Weight and Importance of the Occasion, The Matters to be Treated of, deserve no less then an Assembly of the Three Estates, and a full concourse of all the wise and Excellent Persons who bear a Part in this Great Councel, and do Constitute and Compleat this High and Honourable Court.

The King hath called you at this time, to Examine, and Concur with Him in, the best Expedients, For the Preservation of the Protestant Religion, For Securing the Establishment of it by a due execution of the Laws, For providing for the Safety of the Kingdom, and for the Improvement of its Honour and Reputation. And withall, in Order to these ends, and above all the rest, to Unite the Hearts of His Parliament and People to Himself, by all the Emanations of Grace and Goodness that from a Great and Generous Prince can be expected.

To all which the King is pleased to Add, the Consideration of your Liberties and Properties; and while He does so, you may be sure that He who is careful of your Rights, will be mindful of His own too: For He that does Justice to all, can never be wanting to Himself.

These Points are such, as though they be but mention'd by the King, though they are but onely toucht, as I may say, by His Golden Scepter, Yet this Royal Declaration of Himself, joyn'd to what He hath already done, doth not onely raise all our Hopes, but carries in it self so evident an Assurance, and is Stampt by so Sacred an Authority, that there remains no place for Doubting, Nothing can be added to the Efficacy of it.

His Majesty begins with the Consideration of Religion, He sees it is the first thing in all your Thoughts, and you cannot but see that it hath been, and still is the first and Principal part of His Care.

His Majesty hath considered Religion, First in General, As it is Protestant, and stands in Opposition to Popery: And upon this Accompt it is that He hath awakened all the Laws against the Papists: There is not one Statute extant in all the Volume of our Laws, but His Majesty hath now put it in a way of taking its full Course against them. And upon this Account also it is, that in a League lately renewed with a Protestant Crown, His Majesty hath made it one Article of that League, That there shall be a Mutual Defence of the Protestant Religion.

His Majesty hath considered Religion again more particularly, as it is the Protestant Religion Established by Law in the Church of *England*, He sees, that as such, it is not onely best suited to the *Monarchy*, and most likely to defend it, but most able to defend it self against the Enemies of all Reformation: And therefore upon this Account it is that His Majesty, with equal and impartial Justice, hath reviv'd all the Laws against Dissenters and Non-conformists; But not with equal Severity: For the Laws against the Papists are edg'd, and the execution of them Quicken'd by new rewards proposed to the Informers: Those against Dissenters are left to that strength which they have already, Both these and all other Laws whatsoever, are always understood to be subject to the pleasure of a Parliament, which may Alter, Amend, or Explain them as they see Cause, and according unto Publique Convenience.

For, when we consider Religion in Parliament, we are suppos'd to consider

it as a Parliament ſhould do, and as Parliaments in all Ages have done, That is, As it is a Part of our Laws, a Part, and a Neceſſary Part of our Government. For as it works upon the Conſcience, as it is an inward Principle of the Divine life by which good men do govern all their Actions, the State hath nothing to do with it, 'tis a Thing which belongs to another kind of Commiſſion then that by which we ſit here.

Now as it relates to Government, 'tis ſomewhat an unpleaſant Obſervation, to ſee how ſlow many inferiour Magiſtrates are in the diſcharge of this part of their Duty, which refers to the ſafety of the Church againſt the Enemies on both ſides of it, the Papiſts, and the Diſſenters. For this is that which opens mens mouths to Object againſt the Laws themſelves: This is that which encourages Offenders to Diſpute that Authority which they ſhould obey, and to Judge thoſe Laws by which they Ought to be Judged. They have found a way to make even *Juſtice* it ſelf Criminal, by giving it a hard Name, and calling it *Perſecution*.

To what a ſtrange kind of Perplexity do men Labour to reduce this Government! If the Laws againſt Recuſants be not executed, the Church of *England* is abandon'd, If they be, All ſorts of Recuſants complain of Perſecution, As if the abandoning of the Church of *England* were not in ſome ſenſe a Perſecution too.

Let us ſuppoſe that Poſſible, which the Piety and Goodneſs of the King hath made next to impoſſible; But let it be for once ſuppoſed, That the Church of *England* were forſaken, Her Authority made inſignificant, Her Government precarious, Suppoſe her diſarm'd of all thoſe Laws by which ſhe is guarded, deny'd all Aid from the Civil Magiſtrate, and that none were oblig'd to Obey her Commands, but thoſe that have a mind to it, Would not this turn a National Church into nothing elſe but a Tolerated Sect or Party in the Nation? Would it not take away all Appearance of Eſtabliſhment from it? Would it not drive the Church into the Wilderneſs again, where ſhe ſhould be ſure to find her ſelf encompaſſed with all ſorts of Enemies, If at Leaſt ſhe could find her ſelf at all, in the midſt of ſo many Tolerations?

Seeing then no way can be taken, but one ſide or other will either call or think it Perſecution, The choice is not difficult, 'tis better to have a ſtrict Rule then none at all, better to make the Law that Rule, then to leave every man to be a Law and a Rule unto himſelf.

Happy is that Government where men Complain of the ſtrict Execution of the Laws, eſpecially when a Parliament is ſitting, which can take the trueſt Meaſures, and where the Wiſdom of the Nation is to Judge of the Intereſt of it

In the next place the King hath thought fit to direct your Conſiderations upon the Safety and Honour of the State, Both which are then beſt provided for when we keep up the Strength and Reputation of our Fleet.

So the *Roman* State thought, when (as the Orator tells us) they Decreed *Non ſolum Præſidii, ſed etiam Ornandi Imperii cauſâ Navigandum eſſe*.

'Tis not altogether the Natural Decay of Shipping, No nor the Accidents of War, that have leſſen'd our Fleet, though ſomething may be attributed to both theſe. But our Fleet ſeems rather to be weaken'd for the preſent, by being outgrown and out-built by our Neighbours.

Now as the Times of Youth and Health are beſt employ'd in providing againſt the Incommodities and Inconveniences of Sickneſs and old Age; So there cannot be a better uſe made of times of Peace, then to provide for times of War, there cannot be a greater Security againſt your Enemies, then to be alwayes in a Poſture ready to receive them.

Fleets may Secure you abroad, but good Laws are neceſſary to preſerve you at home. Nothing recommends the preſent Age unto Poſterity ſo much as the wiſdom & the temper of the Laws that are made in it, For all ſucceeding Ages Judge of our Laws, as we do of our Anceſtors, by the true and unerring Rule of Experience. In making of Laws therefore it will import us to conſider, That, Too many

Laws

Laws are a Snare; Too few are a weakneſs in the Government, Too gentle are ſeldom obeyed, Too ſevere are all ſeldom executed: And Sanguinary Laws are for the moſt part either the Cauſe or the Effect of a Diſtemper in the State.

To Eſtabliſh this State there ſeems not to need many new Laws, ſome will always be wanting; And though all that is wanting ſhould not now be Finiſhed, Yet whatever ſhall remain Unfiniſht, may be perfected in Winter, At which time We have a Gracious intimation from His Majeſty, that We ſhall meet again.

But leaſt your greater and Weightier Affairs ſhould make you paſs by things of leſſer moment, it may not be amiſs to put you in mind to provide againſt the Exceſs of New Buildings near *London* and *Weſtminſter*, 'Tis a growing miſchief, which nothing but a New Law can put a ſtop to, A miſchief which for a long time hath Depopulated the Countrey, and now begins to Depopulate the City too, by leaving a great part of it uninhabited.

Yet that you may not only Entertain your Selves with careful and provident thoughts for the future, Be pleaſed a little to conſider and rejoyce in the Happineſs of our preſent Eſtate.

If we look upon the State of Things abroad, we ſhall find our ſelves in ſuch Circumſtances, that it were great impiety not to acknowledge thoſe Mercies which by a rare felicity have diſtinguiſht us from our now miſerable neighbors.

Warrs and Confuſions cover the Face of the reſt of the Chriſtian World, while we have no other part in all theſe afflictions but that of a Chriſtian compaſſion.

We are newly gotten out of an Expenſive Warr, and gotten out of it upon Terms more honorable then ever, The whole World is now in peace with Us, All Ports are open to Us, and we exerciſe a free and uninterrupted Traffique through the Ocean. And we are reaping the Fruits of all this Peace by a daily Improvement of our Trade, and in the encreaſe of our Shipping and Navigation.

Our Conſtitution ſeems to be ſo vigorous and ſo ſtrong, that nothing can diſorder it, but our Selves.

No Influences of the Starrs, No Configurations of the Heavens are to be fear'd, ſo long as theſe Two Houſes ſtand in a good Diſpoſition to each other, and Both of them in a happy Conjunction with their Lord and Soveraign.

Why ſhould we doubt it? Never was Diſcord more unſeaſonable.

A Difference in matters of the Church would Gratify the Enemies of our Religion, and do them more Service then the beſt of their Auxiliaries.

A Difference in matters of State would gratify our Enemies too, the Enemies of our Peace, The Enemies of this Parliament, even all thoſe both at home and abroad, that hope to ſee, and Practize to bring about new Changes and Revolutions in the Government.

They underſtand well enough that the beſt Health may be deſtroy'd by too much care of it, and Anxious Scrupulous Care, A Care that is always tampering, A Care that Labors ſo long to purge all ill Humors out of the Body, that at Laſt it Leaves neither good Blood nor Spirits behind.

In like manner there are two Symptomes which are dangerous in Every State, and of which the Hiſtorian hath long ſince given us Warning.

One is, when men do *Quieta movere*, when they Stirr thoſe things or Queſtions which are, and ought to be in Peace, And like unskillfull Architects think to mend the Building by Removing all the Materials which are not placed as they would have them.

Another is, *Cum res parvæ magnis motibus agantur*, When things that are not of the greateſt moment are agitated with the greateſt Heat, and as much werght is layd upon a New, and not always very neceſſary Propoſition, as if the whole ſumme of Affairs depended upon it.

Who doth not ſee that there are in all Governments Difficulties more then enough, though they meet with no inteſtine Diviſions, Difficulties of ſuch a Nature that the United endeavours of the State can hardly ſtruggle with, But after all is done that can be, they will ſtill remain inſuperable? This

This is that which makes the Crowns of Princes when they are worn by the cleareſt and the nobleſt Title, and Supported by the mightieſt Ayds, Yet at the beſt but Wreaths of glorious Thorns, He that would go to adde to the Cares and Sollicitudes of his Prince, does what in him lies to make thoſe Thorns pierce deeper and ſit cloſer to the Royal Diadem then ever they did before.

No Zeal can Excuſe it, for as there may be a Religious Zeal, a Zeal for God which is not according to knowledge, So there may be a State Zeal, a Zeal for the Publique, which is not according to that Degree of Prudence which the ſame men have when they are not under the Tranſport of ſuch a Fervent Paſſion.

Hath it not been a ſtrange miſtake in ſome General Councels, and a miſtake which is fatal at this day to the Peace of the Chriſtian Church, that in moſt of their Canons and Sanctions they have more conſider'd whom they ſhould oppoſe, then what they ſhould eſtabliſh?

And may it not prove a piece of as ill Conduct in any Secular Aſſembly to purſue good Ends by violent means, and in the Heat of that purſuit to chooſe rather to loſe that good they might have compaſſed, then to fall ſhort of any of thoſe good ends which they have once propoſ'd unto themſelves.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

The King is farr, infinitely farr, from fearing any Exceſs of this kind here, He knows too well the Wiſdom, the Honour, and the Loyalty of this great Aſſembly to apprehend any kind of Errour, either in your Judgements or your Affections.

He does not only find Himſelf ſafe, but He thinks Himſelf Arm'd too, while he is attended with ſuch a Nobility, ſuch a Gentry as this.

You that were able to raiſe the Kings affairs when they were in their Loweſt and moſt deplor'd Condition, will ſurely be able to keep them from any Relapſe.

You that were able to make this Government take root again, will ſurely be able to preſerve it in a growing and a flouriſhing Eſtate.

Such Pilots need not fear a Storm.

If you could, this conſideration alone were enough to ſupport you that carry *Ceſar* and his fortunes; you ſerve a Prince in whoſe preſervation Miracles are become familiar, A Prince in whoſe Stile *Dei Gratiâ* ſeems not to be written by a vulgar Pen, but by the Arm of Omnipotence it ſelf.

Raiſe up then by your Example, the Hearts and Hopes of all thoſe whom ill men have wrought upon to ſuch a Degree, as to caſt them into a ſadneſs, and into a Deſpondency, which is moſt unreaſonable.

What the *Romans* ſcorn'd to do after the Battle of *Cannæ*, What the *Venetians* never did when they had loſt all their *Terra firma*, That Men are Now taught to think a Vertue, and the Sign of a Wiſe and Good Man *Deſperare de Republicâ*.

And all this in a Time of as much Juſtice and Peace at home, As good Laws for the Security of Religion and Liberty, As good Execution of theſe Laws, As great plenty of Trade and Commerce abroad, and as likely a Conjuncture of Affairs for the Continuance of theſe Bleſſings to Us, as ever Nation proſpered under.

Confirm the Faith then of thoſe that are made weak, by ſhewing them the ſtedfaſtneſs of your Belief, Give the King the Hearts of all His Subjects, by making Him a Preſent of yours.

Then will the King eſteem Himſelf a Richer Prince then if He were poſſeſt of all the Treaſures of the Eaſt.

Then though this Seſſion ſhould cloſe in a few Weeks, Yet it may be perpetual for the fruit it ſhall produce, and for the Commemoration that will follow it.

Then will this year be a true year of Jubilee, and we ſhall have nothing left to wiſh or pray for in this World, but the bleſſed continuance of His Majeſties long and happy Reign over us.

FINIS.